

Message Text

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TAGS: WHO

SUBJECT: WHA ADOPTS PROGRAM BUDGET POLICY PROPOSED BY G-77

REF: GENEVA 3525

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. LENGTHY DEBATE MAY 12-13 IN COMMITTEE "A" RESULTED IN ADOPTION OF G-77 RESOLUTION REQUESTING DIRECTOR GENERAL TO RE-ORIENT WHO'S WORK SO THAT BY 1980 SIXTY PERCENT OF REGULAR BUDGET GOES TOWARD "TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND PROVISION OF SERVICES." DEBATE AT TIMES EMOTIONAL. FINAL VOTE SHOWED G-77 COUNTRIES FOR, AND INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES ABSTAINING. NO NEGATIVE VOTES. AFTERWARD DG MAHLER SOBERLY CHARACTERIZED VOTE AS "ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT POLITICAL DECISIONS OF THIS ORGANIZATION," AND HE SPOKE OF HIS PLANS FOR IMPLEMENTATION. END SUMMARY.

2. BACKGROUND. AT LAST YEAR'S WHA SOME G-77 RESTIVENESS OVER WHO PERFORMANCE WAS ALREADY APPARENT. LAST WEEK, DURING DEBATE IN COMMITTEE "B" ON SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET FOR 1976-- TO COFER GENEVA G-LEVEL SALARY AND ALLOWANCES INCREASES-- G-77 MEMBERS INTRODUCED DRAFT RESOLUTION CALLING FOR MORE EMPHASIS ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND SERVICES TO MEMBERS. THEY ASKED THAT IT BE CONSIDERED AT SAME TIME AS 1976 SUPPLEMENTARY. GENEVA G-LEVEL INCREASES WERE CLEARLY UNCLASSIFIED

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ONE FACTOR IN STIMULATING G-77 INITIATIVE. COMMITTEE

"B" SECRETARIAT ADVISED G-77 TO INTRODUCE THEIR RESOLUTION IN COMMITTEE "A" WHERE BUDGET POLICY IS DECIDED. G-77 DID SO ON MAY 11 WITH CONFERENCE DOCUMENT A29/A/CONF. PAPER NO. 5 CONTAINING DRAFT RESOLUTION COSPONSORED BY 23 LDCS.

3. RESOLUTION. DRAFT RESOLUTION CITES, AMONG OTHER THINGS, LAST YEAR'S RESOLUTION 28.76 (US OPPOSED) CALLING FOR MORE "TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE" TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. IT ASKS DG TO RE-ORIENT WORKING OF WHO WITH VIEW TO INSURING THAT REGULAR PROGRAM BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FOR "TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND SERVICES" REACH 60 PERCENT BY 1980 (DG'S MOST RECENT ESTIMATE IS THAT FIGURE IS CURRENTLY ABOUT 51 PERCENT). IT SETS FORTH MEASURES OF GENERAL NATURE FOR ACHIEVING THIS, ALL OF WHICH WE SUPPORT: REDUCTION OF NON-ESSENTIAL SPENDING, STREAM-LINING CADRES, PHASING OUT OF OLD PROJECTS, OPTIMUM USE OF TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE RESOURCES IN LDCS.

4. COMMITTEE DISCUSSION. INITIAL REACTION TO G-77 DRAFT RESOLUTION CAME FROM VARIOUS DCS (INCLUDING US) WHO PRAISED PARTS OF IT BUT QUESTIONED A) LAUNCHING INTO NEW POLICY WITHOUT PRELIMINARY STUDY BY EXECUTIVE BOARD OF IMPLICATIONS FOR WHO, OR B) USE OF 60 PERCENT TARGET WITHOUT CAREFUL DEFINITION OF TERMS (USDEL TOOK BOTH POSITIONS). THEN, LED BY INDIA, CONGO, CAR, NIGER AND SRI LANKA, LDCS FORCEFULLY DEFENDED PROPOSAL. THEIR PRINCIPAL THEME WAS THAT NEW ERA HAS OPENED IN WHO, WITH LDCS NOW AWARE OF THEIR POWER AND DETERMINED TO USE IT. INDIAN DELEGATION IN PARTICULAR DWELT AT LENGTH ON PAST AND CURRENT INEQUITIES -- CONTRASTING "LAVISH" SALARIES OF GENEVA STAFF EMPLOYEES OF WHO WITH POVERTY AND DISEASE IN INDIA -- AND REJECTED BELGIAN DEL'S PROPOSAL FOR WORKING GROUP TO DISCUSS COMPROMISE LANGUAGE. HE POINTED OUT THAT G-77 HAD TAKEN ITS POSITION, WHICH HE SAID WAS "HISTORIC TURNING POINT" IN WHO HISTORY, AND HAD NECESSARY VOTES TO PASS RESOLUTION. LDCS WERE CLEARLY DETERMINED TO AIR THEIR VIEWS, AND HEAR THOSE OF DCS, ON WHERE RESOURCES OF ORGANIZATION SHOULD BE EXPENDED, WHEN UGANDA DEL MOVED FOR CLOSURE OF DEBATE AND IMMEDIATE VOTE, MOTION WAS OVERWHELMINGLY DEFEATED AFTER INDONESIAN DELEGATE PLEADED THAT ALL DELEGATIONS BE HEARD FIRST.

5. FURTHER INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRY RESPONSE. USDEL CAUTIONED UNCLASSIFIED

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AT OUTSET THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF FIXED PERCENTAGE GOALS AND SKIPPING PRELIMINARY STUDIES OF IMPLICATIONS WERE UNACCEPTABLE EVEN THOUGH USDEL FAVORED PROPOSED ECONOMY MEASURES IN G-77 RESOLUTION. BELGIAN DEL AT FIRST URGED G-77 TO WITHDRAW RESOLUTION UNTIL NEXT YEAR, PENDING STUDIES, AND, WHEN G-77 REFUSED, WARNED THAT CONFRONTATION WITHIN WHA COULD CRIPPLE WHO. HE THEN PROPOSED AMENDMENT (DEFEATED) CALLING FOR PRELIMINARY STUDIES AND CAUTIOUS APPROACH. FRENCH DEL

OFFERED SHORTER AMENDMENT SIMPLY CALLING FOR PRELIMINARY STUDIES, BUT WITHDREW IT WHEN VARIOUS G-77 MEMBERS ATTACKED IT. UK CAUTIONED AGAINST ABANDONING PROFESSIONALISM AND SPIRIT OF MUTUAL COOPERATION WHICH HAD CHARACTERIZED WHO IN PAST, AND PROPOSED AMENDMENT (LATER DEFEATED) SUBSTITUTING "ARE MAXIMIZED" FOR "REACH THE LEVEL OF AT LEAST 60 PERCENT." SOVIET DEL CALLED FOR PRELIMINARY STUDIES AND EMPHASIZED IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING STRONG WHO HEADQUARTERS.

6. THE VOTE. AS TWO DAY DISCUSSION DREW TO CLOSE, SEVERAL G-77 DELEGATES POINTED WITH SATISFACTION TO G-77'S DEMONSTRATED WILLINGNESS TO HEAR ALL POINTS OF VIEW BEFORE PROCEEDING TO VOTE. THEY URGED THAT THERE BE CONSENSUS VOTE. INSTEAD THERE WAS FORMAL VOTE IN WHICH G-77 RESOLUTION PASSED, 82-0-26(US). AMONG ABSTAINERS WERE MOST INDUSTRIALIZED COUNTRIES, INCLUDING EASTERN EUROPE.

7. US STATEMENT. AFTER VOTE USDEL WAS ONLY ONE TO EXPLAIN ABSTENTION. DID SO IN TERMS OF PITFALLS AHEAD: LACK OF STUDIES, NEED FOR DEFINITIONS, POSSIBLE HARMFUL IMPACT ON WHO'S JUST COMPLETED "SIXTH PROGRAM OF WORK" FOR PERIOD 1978-83. ALSO UNDERSCORED NEED TO MAINTAIN WHO'S TRADITIONAL CAPABILITY FOR COORDINATING AND CATALYZING WORLD HEALTH PROGRAMS FAR EXCEEDING WHO'S OWN LIMITED BUDGETARY RESOURCES.

8. DIRECTOR GENERAL'S COMMENTS. DG MAHLER THEN ADDRESSED COMMITTEE "A", CALLING RESOLUTION ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT POLITICAL DECISIONS WHO HAS EVER TAKEN. HE SAID WHO'S REPUTATION FOR EFFECTIVENESS WAS GUARANTEE THAT RESOLUTION WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED (IN CONTRAST TO OTHER UN AGENCIES WHICH HAD IGNORED SIMILAR RESOLUTIONS IN PAST). AS ECONOMIES WERE MADE, RESOURCES FREED WOULD GO TO STRENGTHEN TECHNICAL COOPERATION AT ALL LEVELS OF WHO, BUT NOT, HE EMPHASIZED, INTO TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.
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60 PERCENT TARGET WOULD REQUIRE PAINFUL CUTS IN NUMBER OF PROGRAM AREAS, AND DG SAID HE WOULD INSIST THAT EXECUTIVE BOARD ASSUME MAJOR ROLE IN DECIDING WHERE THEY SHOULD BE MADE. DG SAID WHO'S MAIN GOAL WOULD BE TO SEEK TO NARROW HEALTH SERVICE GAPS WITHIN AND AMONG NATIONS.

9. COMMENTS. SIGNS OF LDCS' DETERMINATION TO USE THEIR VOTING STRENGTH TO SHAPE WHO PROGRAM POLICY WERE CONSIDERABLY STRONGER IN THIS YEAR'S DEBATE THAN IN LAST YEAR'S. THEIR POSITIONS, HOWEVER, WERE NOT DISSIMILAR TO POSITIONS WE HAVE REPEATEDLY URGED. G-77 RESOLUTION PLACED FOCUS TO A CONSIDERABLE EXTENT ON RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND MAXIMIZATION OF PROGRAM OUTPUT. GOAL WAS INCREASED "TECHNICAL COOPERATION AND PROVISION OF SERVICES," RATHER THAN "TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE." DG MAHLER'S CONCLUDING REMARKS REINFORCED THIS DISTINCTION. ANOTHER THEME

REPEATEDLY STRESSED BY LDC DELEGATES WAS THAT REORIENTATION OF WHO MUST BE ACHIEVED WITHOUT FURTHER INCREASES IN BUDGET. IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW RESOLUTION IS GOING TO DEPEND TO IMPORTANT DEGREE ON SKILL AND FIRMNESS OF DG MAHLER WHOSE GREAT PRESTIGE AMONG DC AND LDC DELEGATES ALIKE WAS OBVIOUS THROUGHOUT THE TWO-DAY DEBATE.ABRAMS

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